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ABSTRACT

The Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care Facilities in Canada project was developed by the research committee of the Provincial and Territorial Directors of Child Care group in recognition of the need for documenting licensing practices throughout Canada and for developing a framework of best practices for licensing Canadian child care. The development of the framework was open and collaborative, based on information received through questionnaires completed by directors and licensing staff as well as through meetings of licensing staff in each province and territory. This paper, with separate executive summary, outlines the findings of the exploration of the practice of licensing child care facilities in Canada. Chapter 1 describes the six-phase licensing process in the provinces and territories: (1) inquiry; (2) application; (3) investigation of application; (4) decision on issuance of license; (5) monitoring/evaluation/complaint-investigation; and (6) renewal. Chapter 2 examines the current context for licensing staff and presents findings from the questionnaires regarding caseloads, frequency of facility visits, consultation and support to applicants/licensees, characteristics of licensing staff, and challenges. Chapter 3 details five interrelated factors affecting good licensing practices: equipment and materials, policy, funding, licensing staff, and processes and procedures. Chapter 4 provides examples of best practices in licensing child care in Canada emerging from questionnaire findings. Chapter 5 concludes the paper, noting that in order to complete the framework for best practices in licensing child care, the licensers and the licensees need to be explored further. A description of Quebec Family Policy is appended. (KB)

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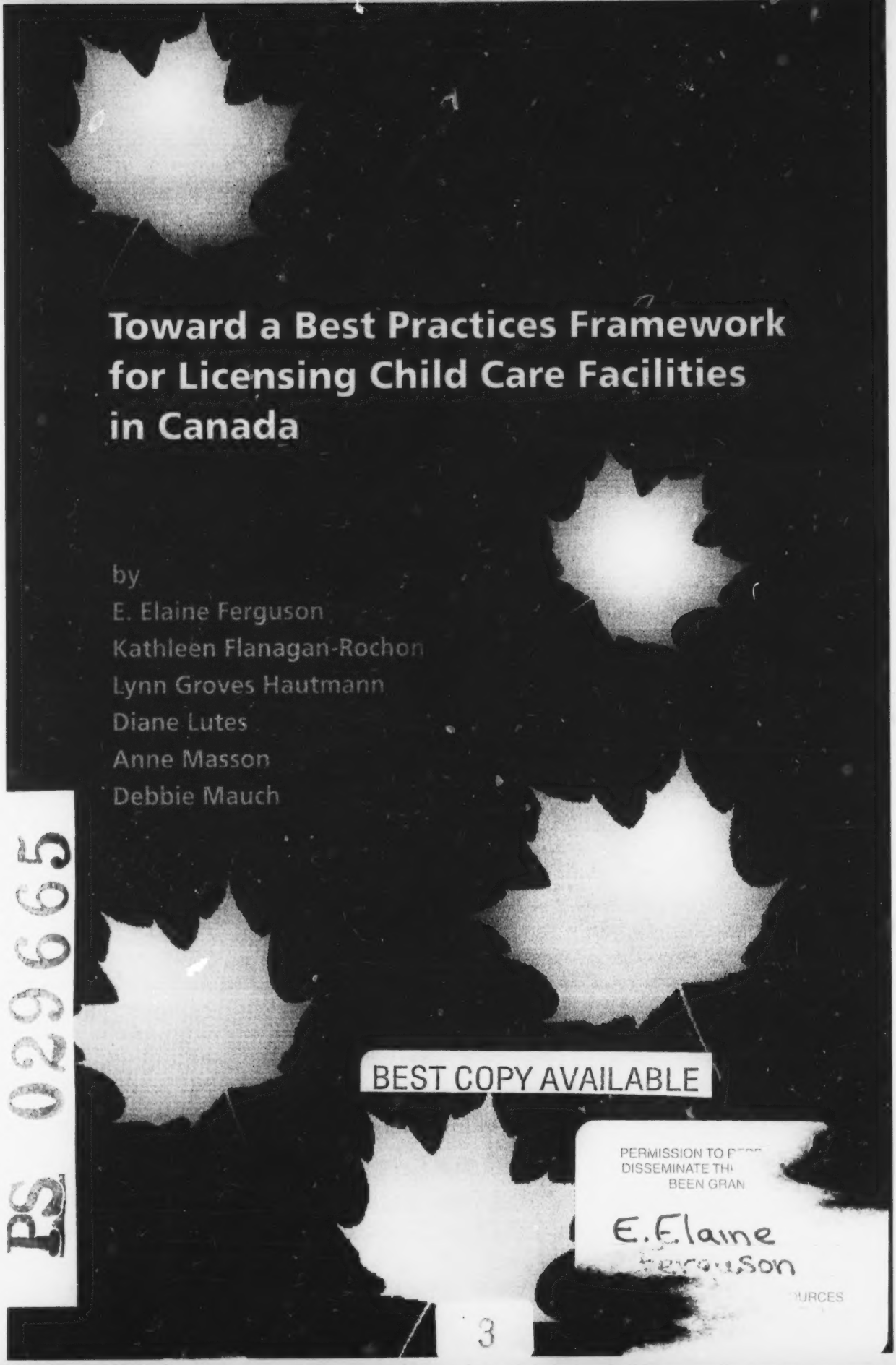

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2000

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Toward A Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care Facilities in Canada

Introduction and Background:

The Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care Facilities in Canada project, administered by Child Care Connection-Nova Scotia, is a project of the Provincial and Territorial Directors of Child Care group. It was funded through the Child Care Visions Program of Social Development Partnerships of Human Resources Development Canada.

The focus of the project i.e. licensing child care facilities, was developed by the research committee of the Provincial and Territorial Directors of Child Care group in recognition of the need for the documentation of licensing practices throughout Canada. The research committee served as the Steering Committee for the project. In the fall of 1998 they approached Elaine Ferguson, Executive Director of Child Care Connection-Nova Scotia for the organization to sponsor the proposal and for her to be the lead researcher in the project.

The research was designed to:

- Examine licensing delivery models in the provinces and territories;
- Examine current research and approaches to licensing;
- Identify the licensing practices of the provinces and territories - specifically the role of the people who do the licensing in each of the licensing phases and approaches to the development and reviewing of legislation;
- Identify the skills that enhance and affect the licensing process;
- Identify challenges that affect the licensing process;
- Identify areas for professional development in licensing staff;
- Develop a framework of best practices for licensing child care in Canada;
- Organize, interpret and articulate the information and framework into media that will inform stakeholders and practitioners in the licensing process and its delivery;

- Make recommendations that will enhance and influence licensing practices, legislation policy and practices;
- Identify areas for further investigation.

Process:

The process of developing the framework was open and collaborative. It began with a meeting of the provincial and territorial directors responsible for licensing child care facilities. At that meeting, a review of the literature was presented, providing a common vocabulary and focus for the project. The Steering Committee took advantage of a symposium on licensing to broaden their perspective on the breadth of licensing and to consult with Richard Fiene, Ph D., a researcher who is expert in the licensing process. Out of that meeting came the guiding principles for a best practices framework for licensing child care in Canada. From there, a questionnaire was developed for both the Directors of Child Care and for Licensing Staff. The questionnaire was around the process of licensing, looked at the Licensing Staff's needs in terms of skills and challenges, identified innovations in licensing, and gathered numbers on various aspects of the licensing process. A meeting of Licensing Staff for each province and territory was held. At the meeting, participants shared unique aspects of their licensing process as identified from

Directors and Licensing Staff Questionnaires:

Questionnaires were received from the Directors of Child Care from all provinces and territories except Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. Licensing staff questionnaires were returned from all provinces and territories except Newfoundland and Labrador. The questionnaires addressed the process of ensuring compliance and of providing support at each phase in the licensing process. In addition, the Directors questionnaire addressed some areas of policy development and innovation in their province or territory. The licensing staff questionnaire asked questions regarding needed skills, knowledge and abilities and challenges faced by licensing staff in regard to the licensing process.

the questionnaires; and developed a cause and effect diagram in answer to the question "What do you need to do your job the way you want to do it?" The group did some brainstorming and problem solving on aspects of their job to take advantage of the expertise of colleagues present, developed recommendations around the assumptions for best practices framework, and participated in a half day session on complaint investigation. All the information gathered informed the development of the best practice framework for licensing child care in Canada.

This paper outlines the results of the exploration of the practice of licensing child care facilities in Canada. As information was examined it became apparent that to arrive at a best practices framework for licensing child care in Canada, two additional areas have to be explored- the licensing people (Licensing Staff) and the place (what is licensed, the licensed operator). The title of the paper, "Toward a Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care in Canada" expresses what we have accomplished to date and sets the scene for the remaining two pieces to be explored.

The format of the paper looks at licensing practices in Canada's provinces and territories, followed by the current context for licensing staff, a licensing practices model and some examples of innovative licensing practices that have emerged from the questionnaire responses and the Licensing Staff meeting.

Chapter 1: Licensing Practices in Canada's Provinces and Territories

The licensing process throughout Canada is very similar with variations that reflect the unique context of each province and territory. While the research was being conducted, all provinces and territories were experiencing some measure of change. Two examples of this are Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. In Quebec, the implementation of the Educational and Childcare Services component of Quebec's Family Policy has an affect on the capacity of licensing staff and the processes used to license. (*See Appendix A: Quebec Family Policy*). In Newfoundland and Labrador, their changing context included:

- A revised Act and Regulations for centre based care;
- New family day care legislation;
- Moving to a regional structure including license issuance; and
- Issues around the introduction of child care consultants into a licensing process that was previously conducted by social workers only.

These two examples illustrate one of the commonalties in licensing child care facilities in the provinces and territories – licensing occurs within a changing context.

This chapter gives an overview of licensing practices in Canada, the composites presented are a general reflection of what happens, that is, all parts of the processes are not always present in every province/territory. The phases of licensing overlap, each phase is connected and critical to licensing. It is a process that begins with an inquiry, and, once licensed, proceeds through the cycle of monitoring/ evaluation/ complaint investigation and renewal, to application for renewal and so on.

What is licensing?

Licensing is the process of applying standards or rules (Act, regulations, guidelines) to a child care facility to determine whether or not the applicant or licensee provides a minimum quality of care so that children are not harmed. This "floor of acceptable care" is based on the minimum standards that have to be in place to prevent harm to the children in care. Additional

mechanisms which regulate such as accreditation and professional certification build on the basic floor of licensing, encouraging programs to provide quality beyond this floor. (NARA, 1997)

Stevens (1996a) identifies three broad risk areas - safety hazards, health hazards, and developmental impairment. Safety and health hazards are more easily assessed than risk to developmental impairment. To assess risk to developmental impairment, licensing staff should have an understanding of early childhood development and the current research and practices related to it.

Stevens (1996b) defines licensing as a specific type of regulation, that is, **enabling** regulation and contrasts it with **directive** regulation. The former "responds to a strong public intent to prevent harm… the law first prohibits an activity but then sets up administrative methods to lift the general prohibition if certain conditions are met." …"regulators react on the principle of substantial compliance …licensing and enforcement decisions are made on an overall pattern of compliance and risk evaluation." [1] In the latter, directive regulation, "the requirements are published that businesses must follow and then enforces, most often in punitive fines, for failures to comply." It tends to react to each violation singularly, issuing a fine for any/each violation.

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1. Stevens, C., (1996b) *Can We Talk About It?* Posted on the NARA web site, St. Paul: NARA.

What is licensing based on?

Licensing is based on standards (rules) that are articulated in an Act and Regulations. These rules are…"consensus on those acceptable minimum standards of care critical to the protection of children... set as high as the public will tolerate."[2] The "rules are clear and easily understood, supported by research findings as reducing the risk of harm, and economically feasible."[3]

Research has identified training, ratio and group size as key standards for quality. Doherty (1999) states that "the best regulations in the world are useless unless monitored by people with Early Childhood Care and Education training and experience, and infractions are consequenced."

What is licensed?

Licensed Operators [4] (Boards or Owners) receive a license to operate a child care program/service. To obtain this license, the facility is inspected to ensure that it complies with the regulations set out in the Act. Regulations apply to the physical structure, the program, organizational

From: Stepping Stones to Using Caring for Our Children. National a Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-Of-Home Child Care

Through a modified Delphi approach, the 981 standards of the Caring for Our Children document were reduced to 182 standards that serve as the most critical and logical starting points for planning policy and regulatory revisions. The process involved ratings by 342 content experts.

The organization of the 182 standards is:

- Building: Safety Policies and Practices
- Other Safety Policies and Practices
- Policies/practices/staff training, and
- Infection Control

Available through the MCHB supported National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, located at the University of Colorado, Health Services Center, Denver, Colorado (http://nrc.uchsc.edu)

2. Koch, P., (1998) *The Role of Licensing in Child Care: Licensing as an Element of Quality*, unpublished paper, November 1998, St Paul:NARA
3. Koch, P.(1998) *The Role of Licensing in Child Care: Licensing as an Element of Quality*, unpublished paper, November 1998, St. Paul: NARA.
4. In PEI, the Administrator/Director /Supervisor is the holder of the license.

structure, and the human resources carrying out the service/program. A child care facility could be a family day home, family day home agency, group child care centre, nursery school, head start program, school age program, drop in program, cooperative program, etc. Definitions of these facilities may vary within each province/territory.

What is the Licensing Process?

The Licensing process is essentially concerned with the series of operational steps that may ultimately permit an individual or organization to provide an otherwise prohibited activity. The licensing process involves six distinct phases (NARA, 1995)

1. *Inquiry phase:* An inquiry is simply a request for information that is made either for informational purposes only or with the intention of applying for a license. (NARA, 1995)
2. *Application phase:* Application means the act of formally requesting of an administrative official permission (License) to engage in an otherwise prohibited activity. (NARA, 1995)
3. *Investigation* to determine compliance phase: The systematic and objective examination of the intent, actions, characteristics and qualifications of an applicant (or licensee in renewal phase) to determine compliance with licensing rules. (NARA, 1995)
4. *License issuance decision phase:* Operationally, this phase requires the agency/government/licensing board either to grant permission to operate (issue a license), or officially notify the applicant of the decision to prohibit operation (denial of license issuance). (NARA, 1995)
5. *Monitoring/evaluation/complaint investigation phase:* This is defined as official observation after license issuance to determine ongoing or continued compliance with licensing requirements. Its purpose is preventive in that it is undertaken to reduce noncompliance and to avoid negative enforcement actions. (NARA, 1995)

6. *Renewal phase:* A renewal of a license is handled similarly to the handling of an original applicant – application taking, investigation and decision making, however, the renewal applicant is also a licensee, possessing status as a licensee.(NARA, 1995)

The Licensing Process in Canada:
Throughout all phases of licensing, licensing staff consult and provide technical support to the applicant/licensee.

Inquiry phase of licensing in Canada:
Inquiry phase: *An inquiry is simply a request for information that is made either for informational purposes only or with the intention of applying for a license. (NARA, 1995)*

- Inquiries from potential licensees are received by the licensing office, either at a regional office or a central office.
- Questions regarding the licensing process are answered.
- An application/information package on requirements and process is sent out if inquirers want to continue the process.
- Inquirers are asked to read the information provided and to contact Licensing Staff if there are any questions.
- Licensing orientation sessions may be offered.

Licensing packages may include:

- An application form;
- Copy of the Child Care Act and Regulations with amendments and updates;
- Municipal regulations;
- Information on the licensing process and the roles and responsibilities of the applicant and the licensing staff such as:
  - Guidelines to developing the service plan
  - A sheet outlining what must be included on the official plan of the premise and where to submit the plan
  - Fire Preparedness Policy
  - Sample forms for medications, emergency medical attention, field trips, incident reports, accident reports, registration, first aid kit contents, surveys, sample budgets, policies, sample forms, regulations etc.

(cont'd. page 10)

- A site visit to determine suitability of space may be conducted.
- A meeting of individuals and groups may take place to discuss child care options for the community.

(cont'd. from page 9)

- Protocols for handling child abuse and neglect
- Information on parent subsidy system
- Toy list/outdoor play space requirements
- Criminal Record Search Information handout
- Fact sheet on personal Child Welfare Checks
- Information on obtaining a letter of permission
- Resources on staff qualifications
- Information on calculating staff member to child ratios.
- Medical reference form
- Staff Certification application
- Approved First Aid Courses for Child Care

- **Resources:**
  - Brochure on custody arrangements
  - Canada's Food Guide for preschoolers and a menu planner
  - Guidelines for handling HIV infection and AIDS
  - Guidance and Discipline
  - Infection control guidelines
  - Parents guide to finding Quality Child Care
  - Supported Child Care Information
  - Resources on programming
  - Referrals to child care resource organizations

Application Phase of Licensing In Canada

Application phase: *Application means the act of formally requesting of an administrative official permission (License) to engage in an otherwise prohibited activity. (NARA, 1995)*

- Applications are received.
- A letter may be sent to acknowledge receipt of the application.
- A file is opened in the applicant's name and a Licensing Staff assigned.
- A relationship is developed with the applicant, providing consultation on the process and development of required plans and policies.
- The application may be put onto the social services database.
- The application is checked for completeness.
- Criminal Records Check or Child Abuse Registry checks are conducted. In provinces/ territories where the licensing agency makes the inquiries, a letter of permission is required. Where the applicant is responsible for the checks, information and forms are forwarded to the applicant.
- Inspections of the facility by fire, health & safety, municipal zoning are arranged by either the applicant or by the Licensing agency.
- Site visits by the Licensing Staff are conducted – feasibility visits made and follow up inspections.
- Suitability of the facility is determined as part of site visits. When the site visits are made and how many visits vary by province /territory.
- Attendance at an information/orientation session may be required for both homes and centres.
- A manager suitability assessment may be conducted.
- An interim/ temporary/provisional license may be issued.

Documents which may be needed for a complete application include:

- Proof of Incorporation
- Staffing Plans
- Staff Certification
- Program Proposals
- Operational Policies
- Parent Information Handouts
- Layout Plans
- References
- Resume
- TB Screen
- Medical Clearance
- Service Plan
- Insurance Coverage
- Playground Plans
- Policy and Procedures
- Forms
- Funding
- Interim Board of Directors

Investigation phase of licensing in Canada:
Investigation of application or renewal application to determine compliance phase: *The systematic and objective examination of the intent, actions, characteristics and qualifications of an applicant (or licensee in renewal phase) to determine compliance with licensing rules. (NARA, 1995)*

> "Compliance determination is a term regulators use to describe how they go about deciding when a licensing rule is satisfied, e.g., observation, interviews, review of records etc. Licensing is required to operate on the principles of fairness and evidence. Hence, licensing staff are concerned that they use sound investigation techniques, that they use similar yardsticks in determining compliance with individual licensing rules, and that they make similar judgement in how they evaluate overall patterns of compliance..." (Stevens 1996b)

The investigation phase and the application phase overlap when describing them as a composite of provincial/territorial processes.

- Applications are reviewed for completeness.
- Errors or omissions are brought to the attention of the applicant.
- A letter may be sent to the applicant to acknowledge receipt of application.
- Request for references in support of the application may be mailed out to referee.
- A feasibility visit may be made to determine if the application can go forward.
- Ongoing advice and consultation takes place via telephone, written or person to person.

Documents that may be required:

- Floor plans
- Insurance
- Completed Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)/Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS)
- Staff certification papers
- Criminal records or child abuse register check

- Service plan may be submitted with an assessment, consultation, and approval process.
- Assessment, consultation, and approval of floor and site plans.
- Site and floor plans may be referred to health, fire and building inspector.
- Suitability of applicant is assessed, this may be via interview, investigation, documentation etc.
- Security clearance/criminal records reference/child abuse register check is processed.
- Results of record check reviewed, if no record, proceed, if a record, then the application may be refused.
- Onsite inspection to assess program based on Act and Regulations. Number of on-site visits varies depending on the province/territory.
- Facility policies may be reviewed and discussed with the applicant.
- Collateral authorities' reports (police, health, fire, building etc.) are received, reviewed, and filed.
- A decision is formed to recommend the term of license and/or condition of license.
- A refusal may be appealed.

License Issuance Phase of Licensing in Canada

License issuance decision phase: *Operationally, this phase requires the Licenser either to grant permission to operate (issue a license), or officially notify the applicant of the decision to prohibit operation (denial of license issuance)(NARA, 1995)*

- Review of required records and documents- criminal records/ child abuse register checks, occupancy permit, reports of collateral authorities (zoning, building, health, fire etc.) etc.
- Review of service plan, floor plans, etc.
- An interview of the applicant may take place.
- When the facility is ready to accept children, a site visit may take place and inspection checklist completed. Included in this inspection may be the measurements of the indoor and outdoor space; inventory of toys and equipment; safety assessment of outdoor space; indoor play space assessment; etc.
- A licensing recommendation report is completed and forwarded to signing authority.
- License is signed, (in some provinces/territories, conditions are outlined on the license) and forwarded to applicant who now becomes a licensee.

Proof that the following requirements are met may be required of the applicant:

- Zoning regulations;
- Building standards;
- National Fire Code and fire safety regulations;
- Electrical safety regulations;
- Gas safety regulations;
- Public Health Act.
- Drawing of the floor plan of the premises.
- Description of the program.
- Written permission to conduct an official police check on all staff (in some provinces/territories, in family day care homes, all adults residing in the home are required to have a police check completed prior to licensing).
- Evidence of adequate public liability insurance including off premise excursions.
- A proposed budget for the licensing period (child care centres).
- Constitution and bylaws of the society (non-profit centres).

- An interim/provisional/temporary license may be issued for 4-6 months. In British Columbia, a non-expiring (perpetual) license is issued, and revoked only for cause.

Monitoring/evaluation/complaint investigation phase of licensing in Canada:
Monitoring and evaluation: *This is defined as official observation after license issuance to determine ongoing or continued compliance with licensing requirements. Its purpose is preventive in that it is undertaken to reduce noncompliance and to avoid negative enforcement actions.(NARA, 1995)*

This licensing phase involves an assessment of the licensee's compliance/ non-compliance to the standards. It involves monitoring facilities for continued compliance, and if necessary, enforcement of the standards through sanctions.

MacLean (1995) identifies a number of sanctions or consequences of non-compliance. These are:

- Access to Information on Licensing Compliance: Records of compliance are made public; mandatory posting of violations; open file containing inspection reports available to parents.
- Fines: fines for some problems may be too low to be an incentive to improve or too high for smaller centres;
- Income may be diverted from program income.
- May require increased record keeping.
- Compliance reviews: conducted by an inspector in partnership with the licensee after a centre has been found in repeated non-compliance. Other participants could be parents and staff.
- Facility audits are more in-depth investigations into the internal operations of a centre. Carried out by independent trained investigators whose role it is to assess the operations of a centre and then require the license holder to develop and implement an action plan that would correct their non-compliance. Considered an extreme sanction.

- Mandatory Attendance at Training Sessions.
- Conditional Licensure-attaching conditions to a license. If a condition is not met then the license holder may lose their license to operate.
- Suspension and Cancellation of a license.[5]

Monitoring/evaluation includes consultation and support to bring the licensee into compliance with the Act and regulations, giving this phase of the process a self-improvement and preventive component. (Logan & Fiene, 1995, Koch 1998). Koch (1998) identifies the components of effective enforcement as:

- Sufficient, competent licensing staff, well trained in the principles of regulatory administration, including due process of licensees;
- Strong administrative support;
- Guts, heart, commitment;
- Teamwork with legal staff.

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5. McLean, C.,(1995). *Day Care Licensing Demerit Point Systems: A Prototype*, St. John's: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Monitoring/Evaluation Phase of licensing in Canada:

Monitoring and evaluation inspection site visits take three forms: annual inspections, ongoing monitoring inspections and complaint investigations. Records are kept on all visits.

Annual inspections:

These inspections are for renewal of license in all provinces/territories except British Columbia where licenses are non-expiring, and in Quebec where licenses are issued for a three year term. In Quebec visits are made six months after the license is issued and six months before the three-year term of the license expires.

The annual visit provides the foundation for determining the depth and breadth of further monitoring or evaluation of a facility.

Range of enforcement actions:

- License put on hold
- Terms or conditions on a license
- Conditional/ temporary/provisional/ short term/full term license granted
- Formal Investigation under the Act
- Issue an Order under the Act
- Fines
- Freeze funding for duration of Order
- Suspend or Revoke a License

- The file history of the licensed operator is reviewed and in those provinces/ territories where there is a formal process of risk prioritizing the priority category is reviewed.
- Annual request for site to be inspected by fire and health is issued, either by the licensing staff or requested that licensed operator makes the appointments. [6]
- Licensing staff may attend board meetings to provide advice and consultation.
- Licensing checklists are used on-site to inspect. Items are determined by the Act and Regulations and standards of practice, and may include staff child ratios, record keeping, supervision, child guidance policies and

6. In Ontario, annual fire and health inspections are not required under the Day Nurseries Act. Fire and Health Departments are responsible for ensuring their legislation. If an inspection has occurred, then the Licensee must submit a copy to the Ministry or if licensing staff have some concerns regarding safety, they may contact the Fire or Health to follow up with the Licensee.

procedures, staff qualifications, development needs, parental involvement, playground etc.

- This documentation may be signed by the licensing staff and the licensed operator.
- If inspection yields areas of non-compliance the following may take place:
  - Consult with legal counsel
  - Communication to licensee regarding concerns and timeframe for addressing the non-compliance
  - Inspections increase
  - Meet with the licensee
  - Consult and negotiate a plan to address the non-compliance with the licensee … may mean a meeting with the Supervisor of Licensing, Licensing staff, and Licensee and the provisions of support and resources
  - Licensee informs Licensing that they have complied
  - Follow up visit to ensure compliance prior to removing the enforcement restriction
- A follow up letter may be sent to the licensed operator after the inspection that may include areas of non-compliance if some have been identified.
- Non-compliance items are documented, including date identified, the item and the timeframe to address the item.
- The level of enforcement action is determined in consultation with licensing team/supervisor/licensing board.
- A report is issued outlining items in compliance and not in compliance and what needs to be rectified. This report may be posted for parents.
- If the area of non-compliance is hazardous, Licensing may not choose to license further and ultimately revoke the license. When non-compliance areas that are not hazardous have been identified and the parties notified, the licensing staff works with the licensed operator in developing a plan to

address the non-compliance areas by consulting, encouraging, assisting, educating and planning.

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale may be used if applicable.
- Collateral authorities are notified where relevant.
- Timelines and goals are negotiated.
- Ongoing monitoring inspections evaluate the effectiveness of the plan to address the areas of non-compliance.

Ongoing monitoring inspections:
The monitoring inspections ensure that corrective action has been taken to reassess compliance and that goals and timelines negotiated for addressing non-compliance are being met.

- These are usually unannounced.
- Frequency may be determined by a risk assessment process, past history of compliance, practice standards, reports of serious incidents, and results of annual inspection.
- Checklists are utilized.
- The licensed operator may be required to meet with the licensing staff to discuss progress in addressing the areas of non-compliance.
- Time frames may be extended if necessary.
- If actions to address non-compliance are not satisfactory, a decision to not license further may be made.

Complaint Investigation:
Complaint investigation involves the monitoring and evaluation of licensed facilities, licensed not required facilities and illegal operations. It involves applying the standards, enforcement, and application of sanctions where

appropriate. Complaint investigations are generally unannounced; instigated by a complaint, risks/hazards identified with annual/ongoing inspection, or reported serious incident; and generally signal an increase in ongoing monitoring visits and a reassessment of risk priority status. Complaint investigations are part of the licensing staff role. In some provinces or territories complaints are assigned to staff whose sole responsibility is the investigation of complaints.

Complaint Investigation may include the following steps:

- Conduct investigation of complaints and critical incidents. This includes assessment to determine timelines /urgency/ action planning based on the level of risk to persons in care.

- Carry out action plan based on combination of the following:
  - Interviews: Complainant, staff, parents, children, doctors, emergency medical technicians, witnesses, etc. to obtain statements affidavits and staff declarations,
  - Contact and work with federal, provincial and municipal departments (RCMP, Child Welfare, Health etc.)
  - Case consultation with supervisor
  - Complete program observations and evaluate (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale)
  - Collect and evaluate physical evidence and documentation
  - Take photographs, draw diagram of scene
  - Safety Assessment/ measurements
  - Reenact the incident: (assists in determining sequence of events)
  - Complete documentation, data entry, and recordings
  - Assess compliance (determine enforcement action)
  - Provide information to license holder (letter, meeting)
  - In case of alleged fraudulent claims:
    - Collect and evaluate records
    - Interview parents/ staff
    - Obtain statements and affidavits
    - Recommend Action (recovery of money, etc.)

Renewal Phase of Licensing in Canada:
Renewal phase: A renewal of a license is handled similarly to the handling of an original applicant – application taking, investigation and decision making, however, the renewal applicant is also a licensee, possessing status as a licensee.(NARA, 1995)

- Licensee receives an application to renew generally through notification from Licensing. A renewal package may contain a renewal form and information regarding Ministry's expectations for renewal.
- The Licensee submits the application, all necessary documentation, and a fee may be collected.
- Any changes since the last renewal process, including policy and staff may be indicated by the licensee
- The licensing file is reviewed, including compliance history. Collateral authorities (fire, health etc) are advised of licensing renewal and inspections or changes in status reported to Licensing.
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale /Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale may be used.
- Renewal Inspection conducted. A checklist based on the Acts and Regulations is used.
- Documentation of criminal records check/child abuse registry check, list of board members (where applicable), etc. may be submitted to Licensing by Licensee.
- Renewal Inspection may be documented, and in some provinces/territories shared with and signed by the Licensee.
- Plan for addressing areas of non-compliance and time frames for remedial actions may be set.
- The licensing recommendation and the decision to license/grant a conditional/temporary license or refusal to renew is made.
- The licensing files/records are updated.

In British Columbia, non-expiring licenses are granted, that is, after an interim license is issued and monitored for the first year, licenses do not expire, so a renewal process is not conducted there. Quebec issues licenses for a period of three years with an inspection six months prior to the expiry of a license.

Chapter 2: Licensing Staff – Current Context

In a Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care in Canada, "the capacity of licensing staff is integral to the process." The questionnaire distributed to licensing staff in the provinces and territories, explored capacity in terms of caseloads, facility visiting frequency, consultation and support to applicants and licensees, percentage of job spent in each of the licensing phases, challenges and job requirements. Questionnaires were returned from all provinces and territories except Newfoundland and Labrador. Salaries for licensing staff range from $34,000 to $50,000, with the average range being between $39,000 and $41,200.[7]

Caseloads:
Caseloads vary and are affected by the roles each province/territory has for licensing staff and the priority that licensing has within the political framework. Licensing staff may license group child care centres, nursery schools, family day care homes, family day care agencies, school age care programs and other human services facilities.

Caseloads are affected by the size of territory to cover, for instance, one licensing staff in Nunavut may cover a million square kilometers with less than 30 facilities. Caseloads are affected by travel time. In rural areas where there are fewer licensed facilities, the distance between them is greater than in the urban areas. Caseloads are affected by the duration of the license and the risk priority of the centres in the caseload. And they are affected by the internal and external supports and resources that are available to licensing staff.

The Support Role of Licensing Staff:
Licensing staff provide support to applicants and licensees that relate to compliance with minimum standards and enhancement of minimum standards. These supports take the form of newsletters, workshops, program consultation, information mail outs, resource packages, resource libraries, training in and

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7. Researcher, (2000) A survey of Licensing Staff salaries, classifications and work descriptions.

use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, and grants and financial support. This support role in combination with the monitoring compliance aspect of their role is a challenge. This ambiguity may cause licensing staff to ask – "What is my role supposed to be? Am I an enforcer or a consultant?" They report being torn between their enforcement role and enhancement role. The reality is that their role is both and that one supports the other. It clearly points out that licensing staff need to be supported by being provided training and coaching in mediation, conflict resolution, facilitation, investigation, application of ethics, consultation and other skill areas which will assist them in dealing with this challenge.

In Quebec, these two roles are clearly separated and conducted by two different groups of persons. The approach to complaint investigations is to seek satisfactory settlement for all parties involved, improve the quality of service, and improve client satisfaction. This focuses the energy and dynamics on quality improvement rather than proving fault.

Consultation and support may be part of the process for the licensee to be brought into compliance with the standards, making monitoring not only the issuance of sanctions but also can be an effective self-improvement tool. (Logan & Fiene, 1995)

"Positive enforcement strategies encourage or facilitate compliance with the rules in order to prevent negative actions and to nip problems in the bud before they become serious enough to require negative action." (Koch, 1998)

Recommendations from the Licensing staff:

- Licensing staff should be promoting higher than minimum standards of health and safety for children.
- sufficient time to develop a working relationship with licensees:
  - Reasonable case load size
  - Visible in the facilities, regular visits/contacts
  - Accessible
- Continue to be supportive through consultation, working to accomplish goals for quality care.
- First priority is to ensure minimal licensing standards are met and then to support and exceed standards.

Visits to facilities by Licensing Staff:
Annual inspections are conducted in conjunction with license renewal in all provinces/territories except British Columbia that has non-expiring licenses.[8] These visits are generally unannounced, however in more remote regions, due to necessary travel arrangements, they are announced. Other visits to a facility will vary in relation to the licensee's past history of compliance, outstanding requirements or complaints. Visits regarding complaints are made as required.

Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes of Licensing Staff:
Respondents to the questionnaire and participants in the Licensing Staff meeting identified four broad areas of skills, knowledge and attitudes required by licensing staff. These areas are:

- Problem solving and decision making – Knowledge of investigative techniques and complaint investigation. Skills in creativity, conflict resolution, evaluation, mediation, negotiation, analysis, and assessment. Attitudes that are adaptive, flexible, sensitive, and demonstrate good judgement.
- Communication – Knowledge of public relations. Skills in listening, verbal/non verbal communication, writing, drafting, documentation, interviewing, observation, reading, clear expression, research, and interpretation.

Recommendations from the Licensing Staff:

- Support and promote ongoing training opportunities for licensing staff based on job descriptions and roles and responsibilities.
- Licensing Staff should have formal training in Early Childhood Education
- Licensing Staff will take a collaborative approach (multidisciplinary) in performing their duties.
- Licensing staff must be constantly updating their skills and knowledge (professional development) to ensure they can adequately fulfill job expectations.

8. In British Columbia, non-expiring licenses are granted, that is, after an interim license is issued and monitored for the first year, licenses do not expire. Regular monitoring visits continue to be made to assess compliance. The license may be revoked for non-compliance.

Attitudes that are empathetic, facilitative, supportive, and suit the vocabulary of the listener.

- Professionalism – Knowledge of application of ethics, regulations, policies and procedures, best practices, technology, licensing practices, and adult learning. Skills in collaboration, workshop design and delivery, interpersonal relations, public speaking, consultation, computers, facilitation planning, and organizational skills of prioritization, time management, filing systems, and caseload management. Attitudes that are personable, patient, understand and respect confidentiality, independent, team player, have a balanced outlook, and are aware of own and other's biases.
- Early childhood care and education – Knowledge in current research, curriculum development, cultural considerations, community resources, support and referral agencies, early childhood development practices, early childhood care issues. Skills in assessment of the quality of care and policy. Attitudes that are adaptive, flexible, sensitive, and demonstrate good judgement.

Challenges Faced by Licensing Staff:

Licensing staff identified three areas of challenges:

- *Working conditions* – Limited technology available to licensing staff; turnover of licensing staff; child care sector's perception of the licensing role; and lack of time. Lack of time related to being able to spend time at the facility to support the licensee; increasing the number of visits to centres at risk; doing more monitoring visits; coordinate inspections with other jurisdictions (fire, municipal, health); gathering all the information together to support the licensing decision; delays in inspections and reports; inconsistencies in inspection by regions; and travelling, weather and roads.
- *Legislative restrictions* – anonymity and lack of accountability of complainants; other jurisdictions requirements for licensing; cannot track poor operators or staff; and vagueness of regulations, not applicable to some

contexts, a focus on non-compliance, and not always clear to support licensing decisions.

- *The licensee* – Staff and board turnover in centres; incomplete application; both intentional and unintentional with holding of information; Lack of understanding of the time and amount of information required to obtain a license; lack of knowledge of Act and regulations; lack of technology; economic fragility; communication regarding changes in facility (site, new operator, etc.) not always given to licensing staff; licensee's costs of gathering information; and licensee's costs to make changes in the facility; cultural differences, language and values.

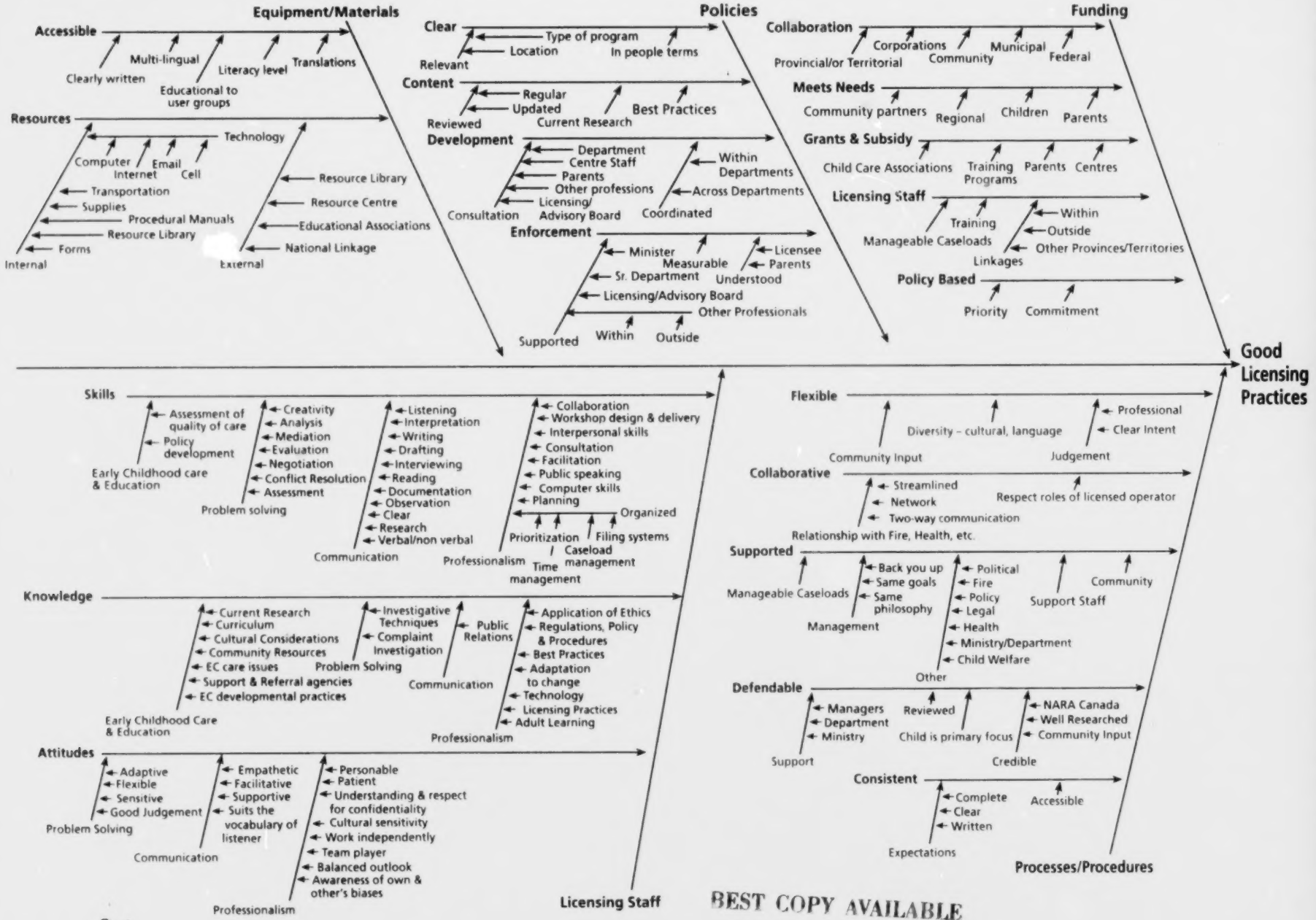
Chapter 3: What causes good licensing practices in child care in Canada?

Effectiveness in licensing is determined by the ability of a licensing body (agency/licensing board/government) to carry out its licensing functions. According to Koch (1998) this means:

- "The formulation of clear, reasonable and valid rules, updated in response to new research findings and experiences, sensitive to diversity, and developed by a democratic, citizen based process;
- The fair and uniform implementation and enforcement of rules with a strong licensing law, legally sound enforcement procedures, sufficient, qualified and well trained staff, adequate funding, and strong administrative and community support;
- Strong technical assistance for applicants and licensees to achieve and maintain compliance and encouragement to go beyond the bottom layer of standards;
- Good consumer education on what is licensing and the roles of the licensing agencies, providers, parents and community in that process." (Koch, 1998)

At the Licensing Staff meeting, a cause and effect diagram was constructed by Licensing Staff from every province and territory in Canada through brainstorming, analysis, and synthesis. A cause and effect diagram gives a visual representation of the factors that cause a complex process. The diagram demonstrates how factors (causes) are related to each other, and how they affect each other. The resulting first draft provided a working model for the steering committee and the researcher. *Figure 1: Factors affecting good licensing practices*, is a visual representation of good licensing practices. It identifies the equipment and materials, policy, funding, processes and human resources (Licensing Staff) needed to work together to deliver good licensing practices. It is the practice component in the best practices framework.

Figure 1: Factors Affecting Good Licensing Practices



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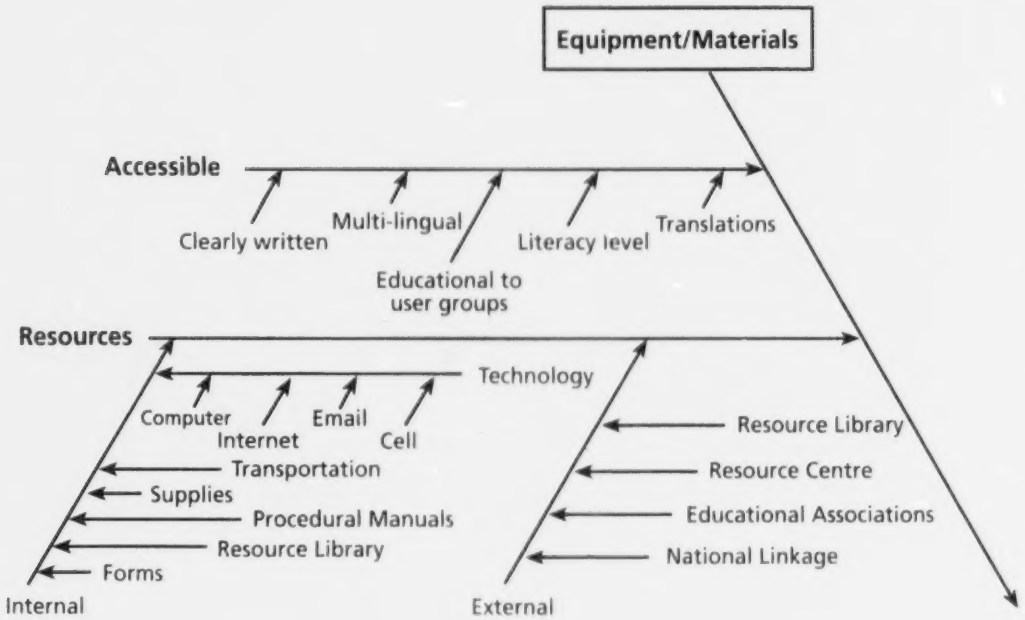
Equipment and Materials as a factor in good licensing practices:

Factors identified in equipment and materials which have an effect on good licensing practices are that equipment and materials must be accessible and resources available.



- In terms of *accessibility*, materials are clearly written, multilingual, sensitive to literacy levels, and translated where appropriate.

- In terms of resources, internal resources available to licensing staff are forms, a resource library, supplies, procedural manuals, transportation and technology – a computer, Internet access, email and a cell phone. External resources available are a resource library, a resource centre, educational associations, and national linkage.

Recommendations from Licensing Staff:

- Licensing staff must have resources to develop programs
  - time
  - staffing
  - availability and knowledge of current research/programs/funding sources
  - funding

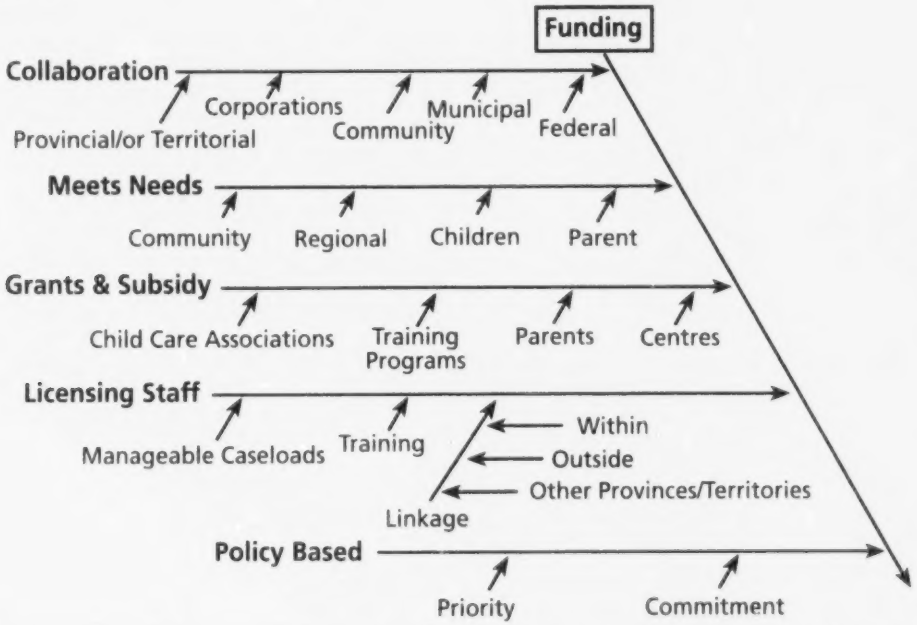
Policy as a Factor for Best Practices In Licensing:

Aspects of policy in good licensing practices are clarity, content, development and enforcement.

- In terms of *clarity*, policy is relevant to the type of program being licensed, and where the program is located, i.e. urban, town, rural, isolated. Policy is framed in "people terms," easily understood, using a vocabulary common to both licenser and licensee.
- In terms of *content*, policy is reviewed on a regular basis and updated as appropriate, it is based on current research, and best practices in the field of licensing.
- In terms *of development*, policy is cordinated within government departments and across government departments. It is developed in consultation with the Licensing department, centre staff, parents, licensing/advisory boards and other professions.
- In terms of *enforcement*, policy is supported by other professionals within government and outside government, by the Minister, Licensing/Advisory Board and by Senior Department managers. Policy enforcement is measureable and understood by the licensee and parents.

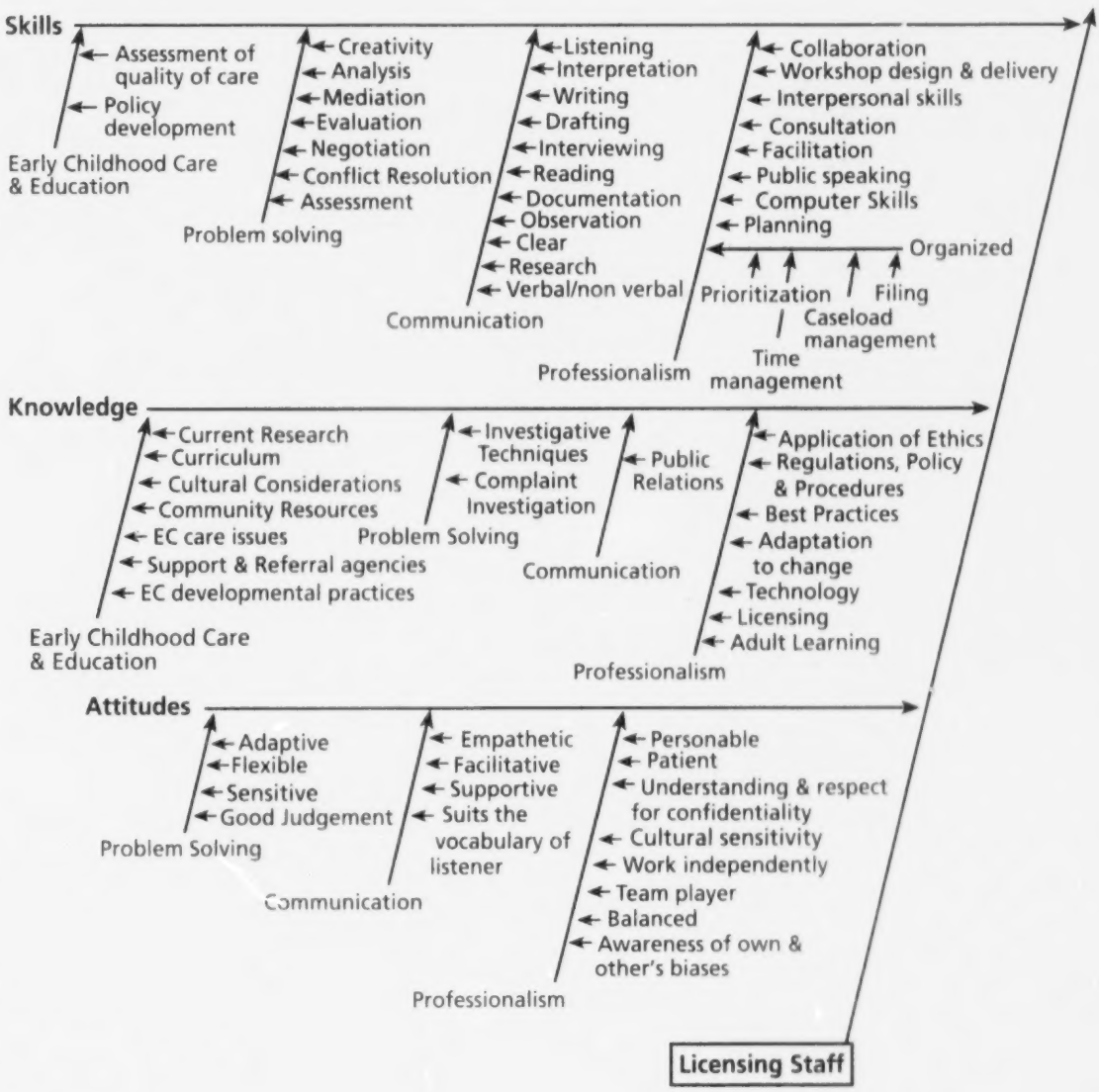
Funding as a factor in Good Licensing Practices:

Aspects of funding that are causes of good licensing practices are collaboration, needs are met, grants and subsidies provided, licensing staff and funding is policy based.



- In terms of *collaboration,* formulas for funding may be determined amongst provinces and territories, corporations, the community, municipal and federal governments.
- In terms of *meeting needs*, funding ensures that in delivering good licensing practices the needs of the community partners, regional authorities, stakeholders and parents are met.
- In terms of *grants and subsidies*, funding is provided to child care associations, training institutions, parents and centres/licensees to support good licensing practices.
- In terms of *licensing staff,* funding is available so that licensing staff have mangeable case loads, training is provided for them and linkages are made within departments, outside departments and in other provinces/territories.
- In terms of *policy*, funding ensures that good practices in licensing are a priority and expresses a commitment to good practices in licensing.

Licensing Staff as a Cause of Good Licensing Practices:
Aspects of Licensing Staff (Human Resources) that are causes of good licensing practices are the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the licensing staff relative to Early Childhood Care and Education, problem solving, communication, and professionalism.



- In terms of *skills,* in early chilhdood care and education, licensing staff need skills in the assessment of the quality of care and policy development; in problem solving, licensing staff need skills in creativity, conflict resolution, evaluation, mediation, negotiation, analysis and assessment; in communication they need verbal and non verbal skills in listening, writing, drafting, documentation, interviewing, observation, reading, research, interpretation and clarity; in professionalism necessary skills are collaboration, workshop design and delivery, interpersonal skills, public speaking, consultation, computers, facilitation, planning and the organizational skills of prioritization, time management, filing systems and caseload management.

- In terms of *knowledge,* in early chilhdood care and education, licensing staff need knowledge of current research, curriculum development, cultural considerations, community resources, support and referral agencies, early childhood development practices, early chilhdood care issues; in problem solving, knowledge in investigative techniques and complaint investigation are necessary; in communication knowledge of public relations; and in professionalism knowledge of application of ethics, regulations, policy & procedures, best practices,adaptation to change, technology, licensing practices and adult learning.

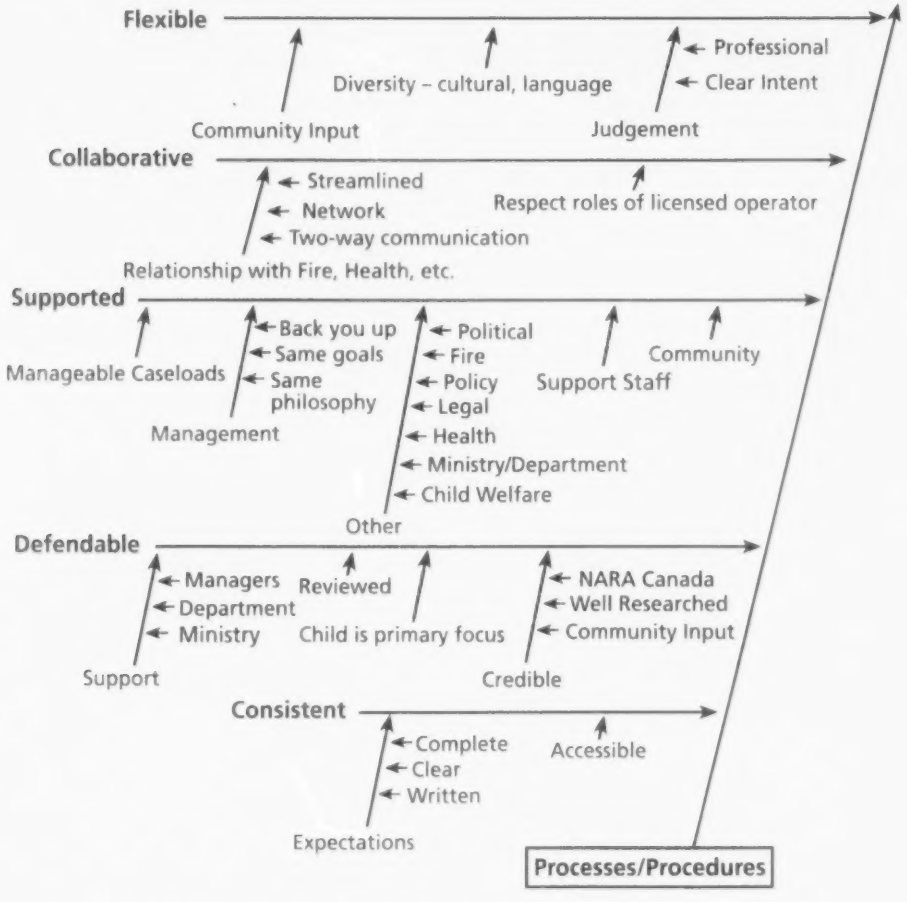
Recommendations from Licensing Staff:

- Support and promote ongoing training opportunities for licensing staff based on job descriptions and roles and responsibilities.

- In terms of *attitudes*, in problem solving, the attitudes of adaptibility, flexibility, sensitivity and good judgement are necessary; in communication, empathy, facilitation, support and suiting the vocabulary of the listener are needed; and in professionalism, attitudes that are personable, patient, understanding and respectful of confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, independence, team playing, balanced outlook, and awareness of own and other's biases are needed.

Processes and Procedures as a cause of good licensing practices:

Aspects of Processes and Procedures which have an effect on good licensing practices are those that are flexible, collaborative, defendable and consistent.



- In terms of *flexibility*, processes and procedures are developed with community input, respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of licensees, and exercise good judgement using a professional approach and demonstrating clear intent.
- In terms of *collaboration*, processes and procedures respect the role of the Licensed Operator and the relationship with related authorities is streamlined, exercises two way communication and builds a network amongst jurisdictions.

- In terms of being *supported*, licensing staff need support from the community; access to support staff; manageable caseloads; management that backs them up, has the same goals and philosophy; support from other jurisdictions, including political, fire, policy, legal, health, Ministry/Department and child welfare.

Recommendations from Licensing Staff:

- Provide physical support, machinery and materials necessary to perform duties.
- Provide human resource support; administrative support; collegial support.

- In terms of *being defendable*, processes and procedures are reviewed regularily, the child is the primary focus, support is provided by managers, the Department and the Minister; and they are credible – being well researched, developed with community input, and resources from NARA Canada.
- In terms of *being consistent*, processes and procedures are accessible, and expectations are complete, clear and written.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (1997) in their position paper on Licensing and Public Regulation of Early Childhood Programs, state some principles for effective regulation.
They are:

- Licensing agencies should have sufficient staff and resources to effectively implement the regulatory process;
- Regulatory processes should be coordinated and streamlined to promote greater effectiveness and efficiency;
- Incentive mechanisms should encourage the achievement of higher quality of service beyond the basic floor;
- Consumer and public education should inform families, providers, and the public of the importance of the early years and of ways to create environments that promote children's learning and development;
- States *(Provinces/Territories)* should invest sufficient levels of resources to ensure that children's healthy development and learning are not harmed in early care and education settings.

This chapter has described the factors involved in good licensing practices. The factors identified support the principles for effective regulation stated above. When all the factors are in place, good licensing practices are the result.

Chapter 4: Some Examples of Best Practices in Licensing Child Care in Canada

To guide the Project Steering Committee in the development of a framework for best practices in licensing child care in Canada, five guiding principles were articulated. These were:

- The purpose of licensing is to ensure the health, safety and well being of young children;
- Licensing practice is a balance of compliance management and support;
- Licensing is a continual process of monitoring, consultation, investigation and support;
- Licensing is the foundation for non regulatory quality initiatives;
- The capacity of licensing staff is integral to licensing practices.

"Best practices are best defined by the following criteria:

- Successful over time
- Quantifiable results
- Innovative (as recognized by peers)
- Recognizable positive outcomes
- Repeatable (should be replicable with modifications)
- Has local importance
- Not linked to unique demographics, although it may have evolved as a result of unique demographics, it should be transferable with modifications."

- Keehley, P. (1997) Benchmarking for best practices in the public sector: achieving performance breakthroughs in federal, state, and local agencies. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

These guiding principles translated to practice would mean that best licensing practices would:

- Have an ability to adapt regulations to community standards, allowing for flexibility and contextual factors and allowing provinces and territories to mold the practice to their own situations;

Best practices may educate authorities, improve management practices; work processes and services; accelerate continuous improvement; stimulate others to action; encourage innovation and the sharing of results; and minimize "re-inventing the wheel."

- http:/www.tbs-sct.ca/pubs_pol/opepubs_O/10QG1-7E.html

- Be reviewed and modified in a timely manner in response to emerging research and community needs;
- Have the Licensing standards (regulations) reviewed regularly;
- Include positive actions to facilitate and encourage compliance with standards;
- Be administered by licensing staff who are skilled in Early Childhood Education and Care- the area for which they are responsible in licensing; and
- Be legally defensible.

As part of the director's questionnaire, Directors responsible for licensing child care facilities were asked to identify innovative approaches to the licensing process in their province or territory. As well, at the licensing staff meeting, participants were asked to present information on innovations unique to their province/territory. Following are the descriptions of some of the innovations, examples of best practices/innovations.

Equipment and Materials:
Use of technology in the Licensing Process in Saskatchewan:

Since 1994, the Child Day Care Division of Saskatchewan Social Services has moved towards increasing the use of technology in the work of Community Program Consultants (licensing and monitoring agents). In use are:

- Computers: Within Social Services a computer network system is utilized within regions and for the whole province. Email is part of the system. Child Day Care uses a data base called "Maximizer" for file managmeent. Child Day Care consultants have laptop computers with modems that can connect with the main network system and access other data bases.
- Portable printers for use when out of the office;
- Cellular telephones for use when out of town;
- Government vehicles for those consultants that have all or part rural case-loads.

Maximizer Data Base:
This data base is used as the main record keeping tool by the Child Day Care Division. The consultants who work directly with the child care facilities use it to record all information about facilities. It replaces paper files. All chronological recordings of contact such as meetings and phone calls, as well as more formal documents such as letters, memos, licensing checklists, etc. are recorded on the data base. Because consultants use lap tops many of these recordings can be made right in the child care facilities, clients can read and have input into the recordings. Copies can be provided on portable printers and left with the clients as needed. Consultants regularily download their files to the network so that management can have access to up-to-date information. Maximizer is used by management to monitor facility development and problems, to monitor consultants work and to track statistical information by downloading Maximizer to other programs.

Advantages:

- Portability of files
- Mobility of staff- more time is spent in the facilities and consultants can work at home
- More time for clients
- Increased safety and contact while on the road
- Less paper
- Less duplication
- Consistency in file readability and use of the Maximizer program
- Less need for support staff
- Computer proficient staff- though the learning curve took some time
- Better stats and program records.

Disadvantages:

- Total reliance on technology, when the computer is down it is a major crisis
- Increased inititial training – new staff now require computer and programs training that can be overwhelming
- Upgrading technology
- Technology costs- system support, cost of new equipment and software
- Lack of cellular coverage in remote areas
- Unique program (Maximizer) means less support since other sections and departments do not use the program
- Physical strain- use of keyboard and carrying the laptops and printers.

– Karen Heinrichs, Community Program Consultant, Child Day Care Division- Saskatchewan

Funding Child Care Associations to Support the Licensing Process: Child Care Support Services in British Columbia

The Child Care Support Services in British Columbia are membership based agencies funded through the Provincial government. These agencies compliment and support the Licensing Staff role and the whole concept of licensing and regulation. Its role is not enforcement, but the program has adopted many licensing requirements and standards as their criteria for membership and developed a number of policies that support licensing initiatives.

Benefits:

- Reinforcement of licensing standards and expectations
- Promotion and availability of educational experiences and professional development for members
- Consultant services and supportive visits when members are experiencing problems
- Availability of good quality child care equipment through loan program
- Access to activity boxes and quality programming for preschool age children
- Connection with insurance coverage and access to government keeps members honest with regard to numbers of children, and members want to maintain their membership.

Results:

- Higher levels of compliance with the legislation
- An increase in quality of child care in the community.

  – *Marcia Thorneycroft, Chief Child Care Licensing Officer, Capitol Health Region*

Application Process
Orientation to Manitoba Child Day Care Programs – Manitoba

Description:
Manitoba Child Day Care offers a number of orientations to those individuals who are interested in becoming a licensed family day home provider or operating a licensed group child care centre. It provides orientation sessions to individuals who have registered with Child Day Care. The sessions are conducted on a regular basis by licensing staff.

Process:
Family Day Care Orientation I:
This orientation is for individuals who need information in order to make an informed decision to be licensed or not as a family day care home provider. It gives individuals the opportunity to ask questions of the licensing staff who are presenting the material. If the individual is prepared to commit to licensing, the paper work to initiate the licensing process is available at this meeting as well. The orientations are conducted by licensing staff on a monthly basis.

Family Day Care Orientation II:
This orientation is for individuals who are in the licensing process already and have had an initial visit made to their homes by the licensing staff. It includes a review of the day care regulations, a discussion on behaviour management, and an overview of provider/parent policies and contracts. It is conducted by licensing staff on a bimonthly basis or as needed.

Group Day Care Orientation:
This orientation is held for individuals who are interested in opening a group child care centre or a nursery school. It gives an overview of the regulations and the licensing process so that individuals or groups can make an informed decision on pursuing licensing. This is conducted by licensing staff on a bi-monthly basis.

Board Orientation:
This orientation is for individuals who are members on the board of directors for a group child care centre or nursery school. A board of directors operates the majority of centres in Manitoba. The orientation describes the roles and responsibilities of the volunteer positions held by parents and community members who comprise the board.

Strengths:

- These orientations (Family Day Care Orientation I and Group Day Care Orientation) allow participants to make informed decisions regarding licensing.
- The Family Day Care Orientation II and Board Orientation provide a more detailed review of specific information and allow for interactive participation. Participants also have the opportunity to meet other participants with similar experiences, often leading to an ongoing professional relationship.

Weaknesses:

- At times the groups become too large for any purposeful interaction between the participants. Additional orientations are conducted if necessary.
- Although registration is necessary, there are always a percentage of individuals who do not attend.

Considerations:
There is a constant attempt to increase the interaction in all group orientations. Some orientations are more successful in doing this due to the number of participants.

Enforcement Policies supported by a Licensing Board
Child Care Facilities Board of Prince Edward Island

History and Background:
In 1971, the Department of Social Services was designed as the agency responsible for the regulatior of child care facilities and for the management of whatever public funds would be appropriated for child care purposes. In 1973, legislation was enacted , the Child Care Facilities Act, designating the Child Care Facilities Board as responsible for licensing child care facilities and establishing the composition of the Board- appointee of the Minister of Health, one by the Minister of Education, two members-at-large appointed by the Minister of Social Services, the Minister responsible for the Act, and the chair who was the Director of Child Welfare.

In 1977 the Minister appointed a respresentative from the Early Childhood Development Association and one from the Parents for Quality Day Care group as the two members-at-large on the Child Care Facilities Board, and the Early Childhood Development Coordinator was designated to serve as a resource to the Board to provide the expertise in the field of early childhood development. The Coordinator's secretary served as staff support to the Board.

In 1980, the composition of the Board was amended through the Child Care Facilities Act to include: one member from Health and Social Services appointed by the Minister of Health & Social Services; one member from the Department of Education appointed by the Minister of Education; four members at large appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Services; a chair who is a public officer appointed by the Minsiter of Health and Social Services; and the Early Child Development Coordinator and her secretary as non voting resource people.

In 1980, the Minister agreed to a request by the Early Childhood Development Association that two representatives of the Association sit as members-at-large on the Facilities Board. In 1987, the Act was amended resulting in a change in the

composition of the board to two members-at-large and two representatives for the Early Childhood Development Association. Certification requirements were also introduced.

Functions:

- To carry out the administration of the Child Care Facilities Act on behalf of the Minister of Heatlh and Social Services.
- To be responsible for the licensing of all early childhood facilities.
- To enforce the Child Care Facilities Act and Regulations.

Process:

- Meets every six weeks.
- The agenda primarly consists of the licensing or relicensing of centres
- When a centre is being considered for licensing, the secretary makes available to each member the results of fire and health inspections, the application and other pertinent information. If all reports are in order, a license is granted; in the case of any discrepencies or questions, the Board examines the issue and makes a decision on further action.
- Once all licenses have been reviewed, the Board moves to other items on the agenda. These may include: dealing with complaints, reporting on correspondence, discussion of trends in the field, reports or updates on regulations in other provinces, a review of guidelines and Regulations, new information that should be passed on the Licensed Operators, update from the resource person, etc.

Current work:

Changes to the regulations- a new process for renewal of a license and appeal that might follow; rights of applicants and licensees;criminal record check; additional training requirements;training; and regulations around kindergarten.

– *Cathy McCormick, Early Childhood Development Coordinator, Prince Edward Island*

Processes and Procedures to Contribute to Manageable Caseloads: Compliance Management System in Alberta

Purpose:
To implement a risk assessment tool that prioritizes day care centres and tracks their performance on non compliance to five critical standards. These include: staff to child ratios, supervision, staff qualifications, child guidance and meeting developmental needs of children. Priority categories trigger inspection frequency with more frequent visits to problematic day care centres. Enforcement action strategies are implemented where centres are not meeting critical standards or do not meet standards on a regular basis.

Background:
Effective the fall of 1997, all day care centres in Alberta were prioritized and assigned to a High, Medium or Low Priority category based on the history of non-compliance and the ongoing risk to children in the child care facility.

Process:
For the purposes of risk assessment, the Day Care Regulations under the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act are grouped into three categories, Critical, Significant, and Important

The Critical Standards are:
- Primary staff to child ratios
- Adequate supervision
- Developmentally Appropriate Programming
- Qualified staff at the appropriate levels
- Child Management practices that are fair and reasonable

The Significant Standards are:
- At least two staff are present when seven or more children are in attendance
- Furnishings and equipment are safe and maintained and of suitable quantity, quality and a variety of both indoors and outdoors.

- At least one primary staff member with first aid is on the premises at all times.

The Important Standards:

- All other requirements (records, nutrition) etc.

The assignment of a priority category is based on the number of non-compliances within each category:

- High Priority – four or more non-compliances to the critical standards.
- Medium Priority – two or three non-compliances to the critical standards.
- Low Priority – zero or one non-compliance to the critical standards.

At the time of license renewal the history of non-compliance to standards is reviewed and the priority category is assessed for suitability. Licensing Officers may revise the category at any time during the licensing period if non-compliances indicate children to be at risk.

Revisions to the priority category would be made in consideration of the folllowing:

- Total number of non-compliances to critical standards
- Frequency of non-compliances to any one critical standard
- Time fame in which non-compliances occurred, previous history and subsequent history
- Number and type of enforcement actions taken against the centre. (Notice of Deficiency or greater)
- Number of non-compliances to Significant Standards
- Number of non-compliances to Important Standards
- Total number of inspections
- Any other relevant information (critical/serious incident)
- Severity of the non-compliance will also be taken into account

Centres in each priority are inspected at the following minimum frequency:

- High Priority – Six inspections in six months (all unannounced)

- Medium Priority – Two monitors and one license renewal per license period (one year)
- Low Priority – One monitor and one renewal per license period (one year)

Where regional priority demands and caseloads allow, a centre may be visited more frequently than the minimum.

Strengths:
Provides an effective and efficient caseload management tool:

- Quarterly reports provide current information on day care performance at regional and provincial levels that allows for comparisons in terms of caseload numbers, types and issues and may be used as a supervisory tool for monitoring licensing officer performance.
- The ability of licensing officers to adjust or maintain priority category allows for consideration of the severity of the noncompliance and other information based on the licensing officer's assessment of the facility's overall operations.

Weaknesses:
The Compliance Management System on its own does not present a complete picture of day care performance in isolation. For example, as the system changes the priority category of a day care centre when a certain number of non-compliance are entered, it does not take into account an isolated incident in a low priority centre (high quality) that without licensing officer discretion could be moved to high priority, (labeled as problematic).

Problems encountered:
When the system was implemented in 1994 it did not include the program flexibility to change priority categories by front line licensing staff. This led to a number driven system that was not reflective of overall day care performance at a provincial level. This was rectified in 1997 based on regional licensing staff feedback.

Successful replication:
The effectiveness and efficiency of the Compliance Management System could be replicated where hard data is harmonized with the licensing officer's overall assessment of day care centre performance.

Contextual factors:

- Service delivery system through eighteen Child and Family Authorities
- Reorganization of the Ministry from specialized to functional program areas
- Use of monitory penalty as an enforcement tool prior to April 1st, 1999, is no longer available given the elimination of the Operating Allowance Program with a redirection of funds into the Child Care Subsidy.

Human Resource factors:
Organization of some staff in rural areas such that licensing officers will now assume multidisciplinary function for child care and child welfare service delivery.

Contribution to policy development:
Compliance management data identified trends in day care performance and led to policy development around Section 14 of the Day Care Regulation, meeting developmental needs and the introduction of the self assessment tools, ECERS and ITERS.

– Lynn Jercel, Manager of the Child Care Resource Team, Best Practices Branch and Gloria Vanderburg, Licensing Officer.

Licensing Staff Skills in Early Childhood Care & Education in the Assessment of Quality of Care: Program Assessment Project in Alberta

Main objective:
To introduce the use of program assessment tools to licensing staff and operators to provide a best practice framework for assessing whether the children's developmental needs in a child care facility are being met.

Process:

- Phase 1: 1994 train the trainer workshops were held for regional licensing staff and day care operators on use and application of the ECERS and the ITERS; trainers (staff and operators) provided joint orientation to the tools for all day care operators across the province.
- Phase 2: 1999 training on the revised ECERS tool provided to licensing staff in Edmonton (Ma'mowe Capital Region) to ensure practice standards are current.
- Respond to training request from the Child and Family Resource Association members who wish to use the tool to determine eligibility for accreditation by their organization.

Strengths:

- Provided clarity for monitoring body and operators around expectations of regulatory requirements.
- Scale objectively identifies areas where the program falls short and specifically outlines improvements needed.
- Introduced best practices province wide for providing quality environments for young children.

Weaknesses:
Use of program assessment tools not formalized as a determinant of compliance

to regulatory requirements but offered as a resource for self-improvement. Although their use is perpetuated by licensing officers as an indicator of compliance, the lack of a mandatory requirement has meant that only a small percentage of day care operators continue to use the tools on an ongoing basis.

Problems encountered:
In Ma'mowe Capital Region, the trainers offered to do day care staff in-services on ECERS and ITERS as a means of extending the knowledge base to a front line level. Very few operators picked up on the invitation.

Replication conditions:
Requiring day care centres to have an overall global score of 5 (program meets developmental needs) to be in compliance with regulatory requirements.

Unresolved aspects:
Future of Phase 2 needs to be negotiated with the Child and Family Resource Association who are proposing joint evaluations of day care programs with licensing officers.

Contextual factors:
- Majority (79%) day care centres operate as a private business
- Use of a monetary penalty as an enforcement tool prior to April 1, 1999, no longer available given redirection of the Operating Allowance into the Child Care Subsidy Program.
- Licensing function is the responsibility of Child and Family Services Authorities (regional authorities).

Human resource factors:
Changes in licensing officer job descriptions.
Funding constraints on the day care centres and threats to operational viability.

Contribution to policy development:
Potential exists for community based standards to encourage use of

ECERS/ITERS as a means of determining compliance as Child and Family Services Authorities develop regional child care policies.

Policies:
Exemptions to Staff Training Requirements – Manitoba

Description:
Exemptions to staff training requirements allowing a child care centre to operate with less than the regulated proportion of trained staff.

Process:
Manitoba Child Day Care requires all child care centres to forward staffing plans when they will not be meeting the regulations surrounding the proportion of trained staff for their centre. These staffing plans must have the approval and support of the Board of Directors of the centre as well as the approval of Child Day Care. The staffing plan must include a viable plan of education and training that can be attained in a reasonable amount of time. These are discussed with the licensing staff and must be renewed and reviewed with the annual re-licensing of the centre. If the plans are agreed upon and approved, the centre can receive an exemption for up to a period of the licensing year. In order to inform parents this is reflected on the centre's license that is posted.

Strengths:
- This allows and supports the efforts of the child care field in attaining a higher level of formal education for staff.
- It informs parents of the need for a particular centre to upgrade the educational level of their staff.
- It highlights the need for elected officials to respond to staffing issues within in the child care field.
- Centres are allowed to operate while upgrading their staff qualifications.

Weaknesses:

- The staffing plan can be affected by the movement of staff who is in training to other centres or professions. The centre must then resubmit a viable staffing plan.
- Responsive training opportunities need to be made available to the individuals working in the child care field throughout Manitoba.

Considerations:

It is necessary to support the provision of adequate salaries for ECE's in order for them to commit to training, working and remaining in the field.

Managing Caseloads: In Process – Collaborative Needs Based Inspection Project in New Brunswick

Background:

The project is a cross department initiative of the New Brunswick government including inspectors of licensing homes, adult residential facilities, foster homes, day care and public health. The group's purpose is to examine how inspections could be done more efficiently. Four working groups were formed from the large group:

- Collaborative Needs Based Inspection Model
- Response to General Inquiries
- Approval Licensing Issuance
- Best Methods of Approval and Inspections

Goals of the project:

- To streamline the monitoring/inspection process, i.e. remove unnecessary steps.
- To improve collaboration between divisions, re the inspection of facilities.
- To enable inspectors to have high contact with the high-risk facilities, i.e., develop a risk based assessment model.

The Risk Based Assessment Model:

A three part model:

- Establish risk criteria.
- Ongoing risk assessment of each facility.
- Frequency of spot checks/inspections based on risk category, i.e. high, medium, low.
- Actual timeframes to be determined after the completion of the pilot project.

The Risk Criteria:

- Started with 77 items and found out that risk could actually be measured using 22 items.
- Items are based on requirements of the respective acts, regulations and standards as well as current literature.
- Statistically tested for validity and reliability of criteria.
- Developed a draft definitions document to guide users of the form, thus ensuring consistency.
- Developed forms (one for day cares, one for nursing homes, one for public health) to assess risk that can be completed during or after the visit; a copy may be left with the operator. These forms do not replace the inspection document.

Benefits of the Risk Based Model:

- Recognizes the expertise of the Coordinators and Inspector.
- Monitoring and Inspection schedule based on risk.
- Quality of facilities would increase as a result of increased monitoring for compliance.
- Ongoing use of the form could generate a database for identifying high, medium and low risk facilities.
- Establish consistency between inspectors and regions.

The pilot project is being carried out in the Fredericton Region from May 1, 2000 to December 1, 2000. The Definitions Document/Form has been developed.

Chapter 5: Toward a best practices framework for licensing child care in Canada

A best practices framework for licensing child care in Canada involves three components:

- *The practice of licensing itself* – what are the key elements in the equipment and materials, policies, funding, human resources and processes and procedures that deliver licensing practices?
- *The licensers* – what are the core skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for the people who license? What core training is needed? How does their work compare to the work of other occupations in terms of value, compensation and recognition?
- *The licensees* – What aspects of the licensing process present barriers and/or enrich the delivery of child care services? As the recipient of the licensing process, what insights can they provide that would contribute to a best practices framework?

This first phase of the *Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care in Canada* project has examined the practice of licensing itself, recognizing that the central component to the practice is the licensing staff:

- The skills, knowledge and attitudes that they apply to their work;
- The equipment and materials they need to carry out their work;
- The internal policies which direct their work;
- The funding that supports their work; and
- The processes and procedures that guide their work.

As a result of this examination, a cause and effect diagram of good licensing practice has been developed, representing the practice component of a best practices framework. To complete the framework for best practices in licensing child care, the remaining components, i.e. the licensers and the licensees need to be explored further.

- a work description for licensing staff must be completed to use for comparitive purposes. This work description then will be rated using different classification tools such as the Hayes and Universal Classification Standard. With this work description completed, training and credential parameters can be established and curriculum designed. As well comparisons to other occupations can take place.
- The Licensees (Licensed Operator) need to be consulted to identify areas for consideration from the perspective as recipients of the licensing process.

In itself, articulating what causes good licensing practices will contribute significantly to licensing practices across Canada. It demonstrates the complexity of licensing practice and the interplay of factors necessary to deliver licensing. It recognizes the key role played by licensing staff and how they need to be supported in that role.

With the completion of the remaining components identified above, a comprehensive best practices framework will be developed.

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Appendix A: Quebec Family Policy

Quebec family policy evolved from concerns expressed by parents in 1980 which led to the establishment of the Secretariat à la famille in 1986. Terms of reference for Quebec Family Policy were developed in 1987 and three action plans developed in partnership mobilizing the various family partners.

Four key areas were targeted:

- prevention
- reconciliation of work and family
- financial support
- improvement of living environment

January 1997, Quebec Family Policy was unveiled through an announcement by Québec Premier Lucien Bouchard. The ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance was established with the mandate to develop the Family Policy. This ministry is a leader in the field of family policy to ensure governemental coherence with regards to families and childhood and advise the government on its orientations. The slogan of the Ministry is 'Children are at the heart of our choices and parents are central to our concerns.'

Objectives of Family Policy:

- reconciliation of work and family
- universal support to families
- accrued aid for families with low income
- child development and equal opportunity

Elements of Family Policy:

Educational and Childcare Services:

A key element of the Family Policy is Educational and childcare services. The two main objectives to this element are fostering child development and equal opportunity, and offering parents quality and accessible educational childcare services.

Child care centres: Measures for child care centres include full time kindergarten for children five years of age, according to parental choice, (over 98% of children are registered); half time kindergarten for children 4 years of age, supplemented by educational child care services for remainder of the day; and the creation of a network of child care centres in September 1997 offer quality educational child care services for children under 5 years in both group facilities and home child care services. This network was formed from the existing network of non-profit day care centres, home day care agencies and for-profit day care centres. In these facilities environments are provided for the harmonious development of young children, prevention and detection, stimulation and early intervention. The educational program in these facilities are age appropriate, play based and systematically applied across the child care services network. Parents play a dominant role by serving on the board of directors of the centres and monitoring the child care program's activities. The network of childcare centres is an investment conducive to a more preventive and integrated approach; a confirmation of the priority given to chidren and to families; and a major element inseparable from the other measures of the Family Policy. Child care centres are a key position in the continuum of "child-youth-family" services; in daily contact with children and parents, in anticipation of their needs; and a framework favourable to prevention and screening.

There were eighty thousand places in this child care services network by September 1997; one hundred and seven thousand are projected by September 1999 at a fee of $5.00 per day per child. Families receiving income security benefits have free access to educational child care services (2.5 days per week for children 2-4). An average of fifteen thousand new spaces per year are projected to be developed until two hundred thousand spaces are available. At this point about twelve thousand new jobs have been created.

School age children are provided child care out of school hours at a rate not exceeding $5.00 per day for children 5 – 12 years. Help with school assignments is included in the care.

Other Elements in the Family Policy are:

Family Assistance Programs:

- Quebec Family Allowance – to cover children's basic needs, established according to family income reported in the income tax return, number of children, and type of family – one or two parent. When family income is insufficient to met children's needs, the allowance will supplement it to cover those needs. The Quebec income tax system recognizes the fact that families with children have a lower capacity to pay income taxes, and grants exemption for the portion of family income necessary to meet the basic needs of children through a non-refundable tax credit for single parent families and a non-refundable child care credit, ensuring universality of financial support to families.

- *Programme d'aide aux parents pour leur revenu de travail* (APPORT) – Parent employment income assistance program, a non-taxable benefit that varies according to income, type of family and number of children.

- The *Programme d'allocation-logement* (rent allowance program) for families with low income according to the monthly costs for rent and to family income.

- *Programs for the well-being of the population* and, in turn, of children and families, related to – the status of women, the situation of young people, domestic violence, sexual abuse, the prevention of early pregnancy, and support for teenage mothers.

- *Parental Insurance Plan* is a proposed plan to help parents reconcile their parental responsibilities; work-related demand; and their family 's well-being, also to support and favour birth or adoption of child. This plan would replace employment insurance maternity leave and parental leave; improve

possibilities of taking leave. The plan would include those parents who are self-employed and part time workers.

– Bernard Desjardins, Director of Customer Services of Greater Montreal, ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance

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Toward a Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care Facilities in Canada

Executive Summary

By
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Toward A Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care Facilities in Canada

Executive Summary

In 1999, the Provincial and Territorial Directors of Child Care Group, in recognition of the need to document licensing practices throughout Canada, initiated the Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care Facilities in Canada project. The project was funded through the Child Care Visions Program of Social Development Partnerships of Human Resources Development Canada and administered by Child Care Connection-Nova Scotia.

The framework development process was open and collaborative. It included a meeting of the provincial and territorial directors responsible for licensing child care facilities and a meeting of the staff responsible for licensing in each province and territory. In addition to meetings, the Directors of Child Care, and Licensing staff from all provinces and territories (except Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador) completed and returned questionnaires. Both questionnaires addressed the process of ensuring compliance and of providing support at each phase in the licensing process. The Directors questionnaire also addressed some areas of policy development and innovation in their province or territory and the licensing staff questionnaire asked questions regarding needed skills, knowledge and abilities and challenges faced by licensing staff in regard to the licensing process.

Framework for Best Practices for Licensing

The Project Steering Committee developed five guiding principles to direct the development of a framework for best practices in licensing child care in Canada. These were:

- The purpose of licensing is to ensure the health, safety and well being of young children.
- Licensing practice is a balance of compliance management and support.
- Licensing is a continual process of monitoring, consultation , investigation and support.
- Licensing is the foundation for non regulatory quality initiatives.
- The capacity of licensing staff is integral to licensing practices.

Translated into practice, these guiding principles mean that best licensing practices:

- Have an ability to adapt regulations to community standards, allowing for flexibility and contextual factors. They allow provinces and territories to mold licensing practice to their own situations.
- Are reviewed and modified in a timely manner in response to emerging research and community needs.
- Have a process in place for the regular review of licensing standards (regulations).
- Include positive actions to facilitate and encourage compliance with standards.
- Are administered by licensing staff who are skilled in Early Childhood Education and Care the area for which they are responsible in licensing.
- Are legally defensible.

A best practices framework for licensing child care in Canada involves three components:

- **The practice of licensing itself:** What are the key elements in the equipment and materials, policies, funding, human resources and processes and procedures that deliver licensing practices?
- **The licensers:** What are the core skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for the people who license? What core training is needed? How does their work compare to the work of other occupations in terms of value, compensation and recognition?
- **The licensees:** What aspects of the licensing process present barriers and/or enrich the delivery of child care services? As the recipient of the licensing process, what insights can they provide that would contribute to a best practices framework?

This is an executive summary of the full paper that describes the results of the exploration of the practice of licensing child care facilities in Canada.

The Licensing Process

Licensing is the process of applying standards or rules (as articulated in an Act and Regulations) to a child care facility to determine whether or not the applicant or licensee provides a minimum quality of care. A child care facility requiring a license to operate could be a family day home, family day home agency, group child care centre, nursery school, head start program, school age program, drop in program, cooperative program, etc. Definitions of these facilities were found to vary among provinces/territories.

The licensing process is much the same throughout Canada with variations that reflect the unique context of each province and territory. While this research was being conducted, all provinces and territories were experiencing some measure of change in their licensing process.

The licensing process involves six distinct phases:

Phase 1: Inquiry

An inquiry is simply a request for information that is made either for information purposes only or with the intention of applying for a license. (NARA, 1995)

Phase 2: Application

Application means the act of formally requesting permission (License) to operate a child care facility. (NARA, 1995)

Phase 3: Investigation of Application

The investigation is the systematic and objective examination of the intent, actions, characteristics and qualifications of an applicant (or licensee in renewal phase) to determine compliance with licensing rules. (NARA, 1995)

Phase 4: Decision on Issuance of License

This phase requires that the agency/government/licensing board either grant permission to operate (issue a license) or officially notify the applicant that the application has been denied. (NARA, 1995)

Phase 5: Monitoring/evaluation/complaint-investigation
This is defined as official observation after a license has been issued to ensure continued compliance with licensing requirements. Its purpose is preventive in that it is undertaken to reduce noncompliance and to avoid the need for enforcement actions. (NARA, 1995)

Phase 6: Renewal
A renewal of a license is handled in essentially the same way as an initial application. (NARA, 1995)

Licensing Staff

Throughout all phases of the licensing process, licensing staff consult with, and provide technical support to, the applicant or licensee. As well, in many jurisdictions, they also have a role in monitoring and enforcing regulations. Because of this, the capacity of licensing staff is integral to the process.

The questionnaire distributed to licensing staff in the provinces and territories, explored capacity in terms of:

- **Caseloads:** Caseloads vary and are affected by the roles each province/territory has for licensing staff and the priority that licensing has within the political framework. Caseloads are affected by the size of the territory covered, travel time, the duration of the license, the risk priority of the centres in the caseload and by the internal and external supports and resources that are available to licensing staff.

- **Frequency of visits to facilities:** Annual inspections are conducted in conjunction with license renewal in all provinces/territories except British Columbia that has non-expiring licenses and Quebec where licenses are issued for three years with visits six months after license issuance and six months prior to license expiration.

- **Consultation and Support to Applicants and Licensees:** Licensing staff provide support relating to compliance with minimum standards and enhancement of standards. These supports take the form of newsletters, workshops, program consultation, information mail outs, resource packages, resource libraries, training in and use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, and grants and financial support.

- **Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes of Licensing Staff:** Respondents to the questionnaire and participants in the Licensing Staff meeting identified four broad areas of skills, knowledge and attitudes required by licensing staff. These areas are: problem solving and decision making; communication; professionalism; and early childhood care and education.

- **Challenges: Licensing staff identified three areas of challenges:**
  - *Working conditions*, including limited technology available to licensing staff, turnover of licensing staff, lack of time and inconsistencies in inspection by regions within a jurisdiction.

  - *Legislative restrictions*, including lack of accountability of complainants and vagueness of regulations.

  - *The licensee*, including staff, and board turnover in centres, incomplete applications,

lack of understanding of the time and amount of information required to obtain a license, lack of knowledge of Act and Regulations, lack of technology and economic fragility.

Factors Affecting Licensing Practices

Effectiveness in the licensing process is determined by the ability of a licensing body to carry out its licensing functions. The Project identified five interrelated factors in good licensing practices:

1. **Equipment and Materials:** Equipment and materials are accessible and resources available. The resources of time, staff, knowledge and funding that Licensing Staff need to develop programs are available.

2. **Policy:** Policy is clear and easily understood, using a vocabulary common to both licenser and licensee. It is based on current research, reviewed on a regular basis and updated as appropriate. Effective policy is developed in consultation with the licensing department, centre staff, parents, licensing/advisory boards and other professions, and is coordinated both within and across government departments. Policy enforcement is most efffective when it is measureable and understood by the licensee and parents.

3. **Funding:** Funding that results in good licensing practice is based on:
   • Collaboration in developing formulas for funding amongst provinces and territories, corporations, the community, municipal and federal governments.

   • Meeting the needs of the community partners, regional authorities, stakeholders and parents.

   • Providing grants and subsidies to child care associations, training institutions, parents and centres/licensees to support good licensing practices.

   • Ensuring that licensing staff have mangeable case loads, training is provided for them and linkages are made within departments, outside departments and in other provinces/ territories.

   • Developing policy to ensure that good practices in licensing are a priority and express a commitment to good practices in licensing.

4. **Licensing Staff:** Licensing staff posess a series of interrelated skills, knowledge and attitudes relative to Early Childhood Care and Education, problem solving, communication, and professionalism. Presesnt is support for and promotion of ongoing training opportunities for licensing staff based on job descriptions, roles and responsibilities.
5. **Processes and Procedures:** Processes and procedures that result in good licensing practices are flexible, collaborative, defensible, and consistent. Processes and procedures are applied by licensing staff that have been trained and are supported in their work. Support for licensing staff includes physical support (the technology and materials necessary to perform duties) as well as human resource, administrative and collegial support.

When these factors are in place, good licensing practices result. The full report includes descriptions of some examples of best practices in licensing child care in Canada that illustrate how these factors can be put into action.

Conclusion

Toward a Best Practices Framework for Licensing Child Care in Canada has examined the practice of licensing itself recognizing that the context in which licensing staff operates is a central component. Licensing Staff's ability to carry out their task, that is their practice, is dependent on:

- The skills, knowledge and attitudes that they apply to their work.
- The equipment and materials they need to carry out their work.
- The internal policies which direct their work.
- The funding that supports their work.
- The processes and procedures that guide their work.

To complete the framework for best practices in licensing child care, the factors impacting on, and supports needed by, the remaining components – the licensers and the licensees – need to be explored further. Two aspects of this further work are:

- **The development of a work description for licensing staff.** This work description can then be rated using different classification tools such as the Hayes and Universal Classification Standard. With this work description completed, training and credential parameters can be established and curriculum designed. As well, comparisons to other occupations can take place.
- **Consultation with the Licensees** (Licensed Operator) to identify areas for consideration from their perspective as recipients of the licensing process.

In itself, articulating what causes good licensing practices will contribute significantly to licensing practices across Canada. It demonstrates the complexity of licensing practice and the interplay of factors necessary to deliver licensing. It recognizes the key role played by licensing staff and how they need to be supported in that role. This work provides an essential first step. With the completion of the remaining components identified above, a comprehensive best practices framework can be developed.